

Message Text

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 01 TOKYO 01510 01 OF 02 300906Z
ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 H-02 COME-00 AGRE-00 TRSE-00
CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 EB-08 PRS-01 SS-15 NSC-05
HA-05 /056 W
-----087058 300948Z /20

R 300810Z JAN 78
FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4785

UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 2 TOKYO 1510

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: BEXP, PGOV, JA, US
SUBJECT: U.S. BLACK TRADE MISSION TO JAPAN

REF: (A) STATE 17707, (B) 77 STATE 299620, (C) 77 STATE 260029

1. SUMMARY: A PRIVATELY FINANCED "U.S. BLACK TRADE MISSION TO JAPAN" VISITED TOKYO AND OSAKA FROM DECEMBER 3 TO DECEMBER 16, 1977, FOR THE DUAL PURPOSE OF (A) INFORMING JAPANESE BUSINESSMEN REGARDING THE STATUS OF THE BLACK BUSINESS COMMUNITY IN THE U.S., AND (B) INVESTIGATING TRADE AND JOINT-VENTURE OPPORTUNITIES. ACCORDING TO THE JAPAN EXTERNAL TRADE ORGANIZATION (JETROL, WHICH HANDLED MOST OF THE ARRANGEMENTS, LITTLE IF ANY ACTUAL BUSINESS WAS TRANSACTED. THE MODERATE PRESS COVERAGE RECEIVED, HOWEVER, INDICATES THAT THE MISSION WAS SOMEWHAT MORE SUCCESSFUL IN CONVEYING ITS VIEW OF THE ROLE OF BLACK AMERICANS IN THE U.S. ECONOMY AND IN EMPHASIZING ITS DESIRE FOR CLOSER RELATIONS WITH JAPANESE BUSINESS. END SUMMARY.

2. A U.S. BLACK TRADE MISSION, HEADED BY MR. FRED C. STONE, BOARD CHAIRMAN OF BRANTANICA IMPORTS CORPORATION OF ATLANTA, ARRIVED IN TOKYO DECEMBER 3, 1977 AND, AFTER AN ITINERARY WHICH INCLUDED KYOTO, OSAKA, AND
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PAGE 02 TOKYO 01510 01 OF 02 300906Z

ATAMI, DEPARTED TOKYO ON DECEMBER 16. THE ADVANCE PUBLICITY INDICATED THAT THE MISSION WAS SPONSORED BY A NUMBER OF OTHER ORGANIZATIONS AND AGENCIES, INCLUDING THE AMERICAN EMBASSY IN TOKYO, THE EMBASSY, OF COURSE, WAS AWARE (FROM REF C) THAT THIS WAS NOT A USDOC-SPONSORED IOGA, BUT APPARENTLY THE ADVANCE COORDINATOR FOR THE MISSION, MR. SEIHO TAJIRI OF ATLANTA, UTILIZED

A SEPTEMBER 16 INFORMATIONAL LETTER FROM ROY GOOTENBERG,
DIRECTOR OF BIC'S SPECIAL ACTIVITIES DIVISION, AS
A BASIS FOR CLAIMING COMMERCE SPONSORSHIP.

3. AS A PRACTICAL MATTER, MOST OF THE ARRANGEMENTS
FOR THE MISSION'S VISIT WERE MADE BY JETRO, WORKING
WITH MR. TAJIRI WHO WAS IN JAPAN FOR AN EXTENDED
PERIOD PRIOR TO THE MISSION'S ARRIVAL. ALTHOUGH
MR. TAJIRI DID NOT REQUEST ANY DIRECT EMBASSY
INVOLVEMENT, THE COMMERCIAL COUNSELOR SUGGESTED THAT
IT WOULD BE DESIRABLE FOR THE MISSION TO VISIT THE
EMBASSY FOR A BRIEFING AT THE BEGINNING OF THE VISIT.
THUS ON THE FIRST WORKDAY OF THE MISSION'S SCHEDULE,
THE COMMERCIAL COUNSELOR PARTICIPATED IN A BREAKFAST
BRIEFING SESSION FOR THE MISSION HELD BY THE AMERICAN
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE IN JAPAN, AND THEN ESCORTED THE
MISSION MEMBERS TO THE EMBASSY FOR A 1-1/2 HOUR
MEETING. DURING THE EMBASSY SESSION IT APPEARED THAT
TWO OF THE MISSION MEMBERS WERE INTERESTED IN SALES
OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS, AND THE ASSISTANT AGRICULTURAL
ATTACHE OFFERED TO MAKE APPROPRIATE APPOINTMENTS IF
THEY WOULD CONTACT HIM LATER IN THE WEEK. THEY DID
NOT, HOWEVER, DO SO.

4. ON THE EVENING OF THE FIRST WORKDAY IN TOKYO THE
COMMERCIAL COUNSELOR ATTENDED A SMALL RECEPTION
UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 03 TOKYO 01510 01 OF 02 300906Z

GIVEN FOR THE MISSION BY A JAPANESE FIRM, AND WAS
CALLED ON TO GIVE SOME REMARKS REGARDING THE SIGNIFI-
CANCE OF THE MISSION AS THE FIRST GROUP OF BLACK
AMERICAN BUSINESSMEN TO VISIT JAPAN. WITH ONE EXCEPTION,
THIS WAS THE LAST CONTACT WHICH THE EMBASSY HAD WITH THE
MISSION.

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PAGE 01 TOKYO 01510 02 OF 02 300928Z
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UNCLAS SECTION 2 OF 2 TOKYO 1510

5. THE EMBASSY ADVISED THE CONSULATE-GENERAL IN OSAKA KOBE THAT THE MISSION DID NOT REQUIRE NOR DESIRE A CONSULATE BRIEFING, BUT THAT CONGEN OFFICERS SHOULD OF COURSE ATTEND MEETINGS OR RECEPTIONS IF INVITED, AND THEY DID ATTEND A RECEPTION GIVEN BY THE OSAKA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY.

6. BOTH IN TOKYO AND OSAKA JETRO ARRANGED MEETINGS WITH TRADE ORGANIZATIONS, PLANT VISITS, AND RECEPTIONS BY ORGANIZATIONS OR COMPANIES. ACCORDING TO JETRO, THE MISSION PARTICIPATED AS A GROUP, AND APPOINTMENTS FOR INDIVIDUAL MISSION MEMBERS WERE NOT REQUESTED OR MADE. AS FAR AS JETRO IS AWARE, LITTLE IF ANY ACTUAL BUSINESS WAS TRANSACTED, ALTHOUGH USEFUL CONTACTS MAY HAVE BEEN ESTABLISHED. IN A PRESS INTERVIEW AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE VISIT, MISSION LEADER STONE STATED: "SURPRISINGLY, SOME JAPANESE COMPANIES EVEN APPROACHED US IN A VERY DEFINITE AND POSITIVE SITUATION WHERE WE CAN DO BUSINESS. STEPS HAVE BEEN TAKEN FROM BOTH SIDES."

7. THE MAIN EMPHASIS OF THE PRESS COVERAGE, HOWEVER, WAS ON THE MISSION'S INTEREST IN EXPLAINING ITS VIEW OF THE STATUS OF BLACK BUSINESS IN THE U.S. AND ITS DESIRE FOR CLOSER RELATIONS WITH THE JAPANESE BUSINESS
UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 02 TOKYO 01510 02 OF 02 300928Z

COMMUNITY. AS MR. STONE EXPRESSED IT IN THE INTERVIEW CITED IN PARA 6, "WE HAVE NEVER BEEN GIVEN OUR RIGHTFUL PLACE BECAUSE OUR WHITE BROTHERS IN AMERICA HAVE CHOSEN A WORLD THAT DENIES IT....IT'S UNFORTUNATE WE HAVE TO COME TO A FOREIGN LAND TO RECEIVE THE WARM RECEPTION WE COULD NOT HAVE IN OUR OWN COUNTRY."

8. BECAUSE OF TIME PRESSURES, JETRO DID NOT PREPARE A REPORT ON THE MISSION'S VISIT. IN ITS JANUARY ISSUE OF "FOCUS JAPAN," HOWEVER, IT FEATURED A WRAP-UP REPORT BY MR. TAJIRI, A JAPANESE-BORN, NATURALIZED U.S. CITIZEN WHO CONCEIVED THE PROJECT AND WHO TOLD THE EMBASSY THAT THE MISSION'S VISIT WAS A "DREAM COME TRUE." HE CONCLUDED THE ARTICLE BY OBSERVING: "(THE MISSION'S) VISIT TO JAPAN PROVIDED AN OPPORTUNITY FOR

AN ENCOUNTER OF SPECIAL SIGNIFICANCE BETWEEN JAPANESE AND BLACK AMERICANS, AND WAS INDEED AN IMPORTANT STEPPING STONE TOWARD FURTHER UNDERSTANDING AND EXCHANGE IN THE FUTURE."

9. PRIOR TO HIS DEPARTURE FROM JAPAN, MR. AJIRI PHONED THE COMMERCIAL COUNSELOR TO EXPRESS THE MISSION'S APPRECIATION FOR THE ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY THE EMBASSY, AND THE COMMERCIAL OFFICER IN OSAKA-KOBE HAS SINCE RECEIVED A LETTER OF APPRECIATION FROM MR. STONE.

10. THE EMBASSY WILL POUCH TO COMMERCE/BED(GOOTENBERG) AND STATE/EA/J (COCHRAN) COPIES OF MISSION MEMBERSHIP LIST, ITINERARY, ENGLISH-LANGUAGE PRESS CLIPPINGS, A CONGEN OSAKA-KOBE REPORT, AND THE TAJIRI ARTICLE. REQUEST THAT ONE SET BE MADE AVAILABLE TO CONGRESSMAN DIGGS (REF A).
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PAGE 03 TOKYO 01510 02 OF 02 300928Z

MANSFIELD

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Message Attributes

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